

REMARKS

In the Office Action, it is asserted that the application contains claims directed to the three following Groups:

- I. Claims 4-18, drawn to a system and method for controlling a laser beam;
- II. Claims 1-3 and 22-24, drawn to a system and method for perforating a flexible web of paper; and
- III. Claims 19-21, drawn to a system for removing dust.

Applicants hereby elect Group II (Claims 1-3 and 22-24), with traverse.

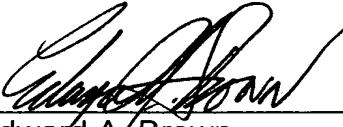
Applicants submit that the subject matter of Groups II and the subject matter of at least Claims 13-18 of Group I is sufficiently related that a thorough search for the subject matter of Group II would encompass a search for the subject matter of Group I, including at least Claims 13-18. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that, in addition to the subject matter of Group II, the search and examination of the subject matter of at least Claims 13-18 could be made without serious burden. MPEP § 803 states that “[i]f the search and examination of the entire application can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to distinct or independent inventions” (emphasis added). It is respectfully submitted that this policy should apply in the present application to the subject matter of at least Claims 13-18 in order to avoid unnecessary delay and expense to Applicants and duplicative examination by the Patent Office.

Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this response, Applicants' undersigned representative can be reached at the below-listed number.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

Date: September 8, 2004

By: 
Edward A. Brown
Registration No. 35,033

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620